

CHAPTER 3

1 PETER

Introduction to 1 Peter

Author of 1 Peter

1:1, Peter the apostle

Cf. 2 Pet 3:1, which refers to the fact that he wrote a former letter. Some (including Zahn) take that as another letter, not 1 Peter.

Very strong support from early church testimony

See Bigg in *ICC*, pp. 7-15; “There is no book in the New Testament which has earlier, better, or stronger attestation, though Irenaeus is the first to quote it by name” (p. 7).

Some objections to Petrine authorship:

1) Excellent and smooth Greek style

Does not seem to fit with Peter’s background (cf. Acts 4:13); probably indicates that his amanuensis Silvanus (Silas; cf. 2 Cor 1:19) helped with the word choice and style (1 Pet 5:12)

2) Similarities to Pauline epistles

Especially to Ephesians (household duties) and Romans (civil magistrate)

See many examples in Bigg, pp. 15-24

Explained by common core of Christian teaching, and probability that Peter read Paul’s epistles (cf. 2 Pet 3:15)

As Peter's amanuensis, Silas would have influence; he had been also a companion of Paul

3) Time of persecution

Claim is that persecution pictured is later than Peter

Type of persecution in 1 Peter appears to be local, instigated by individuals, not necessarily by the state; the major Roman persecution was still coming

Conclusion: objections against Peter as the author are not strong enough to show the book is pseudepigraphal.

Sketch of Peter's life

(See A. T. Robertson's excellent biography of Peter, *Sketches in the Life of Simon Peter*)

- Fisherman of Galilee (Mark 1:16)
- One of Jesus' inner circle of disciples (e.g., Mark 14:33)
- Spokesman for apostles (e.g., Mark 8:29)
- Denied Jesus, then repented (Mark 14:66-72)
- Saw resurrected Jesus (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5)
- Restored by Jesus (John 21:15-19)
- Preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41)
- Leader of apostles in early church (e.g., Acts 5:1-11)
- Bridged gap to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-25)
- Bridged gap to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1 – 11:18; cf. the "keys of the kingdom")
- Active in the Jerusalem Council of AD 49 (Acts 15:1-21; Gal 2:6-10)
- Rebuked by Paul in Antioch (Gal 2:11-15)
- Traveled with his wife (1 Cor 9:5)

- Preached in Rome later in his ministry (Clement of Rome, Papias, Eusebius, perhaps Ignatius; cf. 1 Pet 5:13)
- Martyred in Rome by crucifixion, perhaps A.D. 65-67, prior to Paul's second Roman imprisonment (Clement of Rome, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius; cf. John 21:18-19)

Tradition about being crucified head downward (Origen, Eusebius) not present in earliest references, probably legendary (cf. *NPNF*:2, 1:132, note 10)

(For helpful and interesting account of Peter's life and relation to Paul throughout, see Bigg, pp. 52-67; also see A. T. Robertson on Peter)

Date of 1 Peter

Church organization includes elders (5:1)

Christian faith spread through northern Asia Minor (1:1)

Time of persecution, with more expected (3:17; 4:12-19; 5:10)

Fits well with traditional date in time of Nero (Nero's persecution, A.D. 64-68)

Perhaps acquainted with some of Paul's letters, especially the Prison Epistles (A.D. 57-59)

Examples of similarity:	<u>1 Peter</u>	<u>Paul's Prison Epistles</u>
	1:1-3	Eph 1:1-3
	2:18	Col 3:22
	3:1-6	Eph 5:22-24
	5:10-11	Phil 4:19-20

Apparently in Rome after Prison Epistles written, since he is not mentioned in them; yet before 2 Timothy was written (since not mentioned in it either)

John Mark had gone to visit recipients after Colossians written, before 1 Peter (Col 4:10; cf. 1 Pet 5:13)

Suggested date: ca. A.D. 63-64

Recipients of 1 Peter

1:1-2, Christians in various parts of Asia Minor

Provinces: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia

To all Christians in the region, even though some take to be Jewish Christians (cf. *diasporas* in 1:1; and Peter's role in Gal 2:9); but the recipients included many Gentile Christians (cf. 4:3; 5:14; Zahn, *INT* 2:134-46)

For route of letter carrier, see Hort's commentary, note 3, "The Provinces of Asia Minor Included in St. Peter's Address," pp. 157-84, summarized in Grudem, pp. 49-50

Place of writing

5:13, Named as "Babylon"

Three suggestions (cf. Bigg, pp. 75-80):

1) Babylon in Mesopotamia

No evidence or tradition that Peter ever went there

Unimportant in NT times

2) Babylon in northern Egypt

Military outpost

Not seriously suggested

3) Babylon as a symbolic name for Rome

Use of figure of speech – metonymy

Agrees with all early church testimony

Examples of this symbolic use (Rev 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 21)

Other examples in contemporary writings (examples in Bigg, p. 76)

Symbol of God's judgment and captivity of Israel

Summary outline

— Note emphasis on hope, 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15; this hope is the second coming of Christ (cf. 1:7, 13, 21; 4:13; 5:4), described as the Christian's inheritance (1:4-5)

- 1) Greetings, 1:1-2
- 2) A living hope for those in persecution, 1:3-12
- 3) The life of holiness and love, 1:13 - 2:3
- 4) Chosen by God, strangers in the world, 2:4-12
- 5) The Christian in a hostile world, 2:13 - ch. 3
 - a) Civil rulers, 2:13-17
 - b) Slaves and masters, 2:18-25
 - c) Wives and husbands, 3:1-7
 - d) Hostile neighbors, 3:8-22
- 6) Encouragements in suffering, ch. 4
 - a) Our break with sin, 4:1-6
 - b) Our coming judgment, 4:7-11
 - c) Our association with Christ, 4:12-19
- 7) Special messages, ch. 5
 - a) To the elders, 5:1-4
 - b) To the young men, 5:5-11
 - c) Final greetings, 5:12-14

Commentaries

Robert Johnstone (1888)

F. J. A. Hort, on 1 Pet. ch. 1 - 2:17 (1898)

Charles Bigg (*ICC*, 1-2 Pet. and Jude; 2nd ed., 1902)

E. G. Selwyn (2nd ed., 1947)

C. E. B. Cranfield (1950)

F. W. Beare (1958)

J. N. D. Kelly (includes 1-2 Pet. and Jude; 1969)

Simon J. Kistemaker (*NTC*, 1-2 Pet. and Jude, 1987)

Wayne Grudem (*TNTC*, 1988)

Edmund P. Clowney (*BST*, 1988)

J. Ramsey Michaels (*WBC*, 1988)

Peter H. Davids (*NICNT*, 1991)

Outline of 1 Peter

1. Greetings, 1:1-2

1:1, Author is Peter the apostle (see under introduction)

διασπορά *diaspora*, scattered Jewish (and Gentile) Christians

Note circular route of letter carrier, from sea port in Pontus, through Galatia, Cappadocia, taking road to the west to Asia, back to Bithynia

1:2, Order of election:

- Foreknowledge of God the Father (not only cognitive, but personal, Rom. 8:29)
- Chosen by God (election)
- Sanctified by the Spirit (regeneration)
- Resulting in obedience to Jesus (faith)
- And in sprinkling by his blood (justification)

This introduction sets the stage for the great emphasis of 1 Peter, hope and steadfastness in a hostile world. They have been scattered in the world, yet they are the special chosen people of God.

2. A living hope for those in persecution, 1:3-12

vv. 3-5, Regeneration (based on the atonement and the resurrection of Christ)

Leads to adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification

Trials and persecutions have come, and more are on the way:

v. 6, “Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials”

v. 7, “Your faith . . . refined by fire”

v. 8, “You do not see [Jesus] now”

These are a matter for praising God, vv. 3, 6, 8 (cf. Acts 5:41)

“Only a few months and the Neronian persecution will have burst upon the Church in Rome, where the Apostle is writing, and have cost it many martyrs—among them the Apostle himself. Already the storm-clouds are gathering. There is an oppressive sense of insecurity. The Christians in Asia Minor, to whom this letter is addressed, are also seriously alarmed, and, we suspect, somewhat liable to give way to self-pity. The letter is written ‘to confirm the feeble knees.’ How does it begin? Not by offering sympathy, not by trying to convince them that what they fear will never happen, nor yet with a rehearsal of the writer’s own troubles, but with an ascription of praise and thanks to God—BLESSED BE” (Cranfield, p. 20)

The same Greek phrase, “blessed be God” is used in 2 Cor 1:3 and Eph 1:3.

This persecution is a testing or trial, whereby faith is produced and strengthened, with happy results.

v. 7, Testing produces precious faith—cf. gold

Faith produces:

v. 4, An everlasting inheritance

v. 5, Protection by God until final judgment

v. 7, Praise and glory to God

v. 9, Salvation of soul

This is the essence of the hope that maintains the Christian in times of persecution (vv. 3-4).

vv. 10-12, The Scriptural pattern of suffering, then glory

v. 10, Prophets searched

Not all their prophecies clear to them at the time

They spoke of the grace of the new dispensation

v. 11, Prophets inspired by “the Spirit of Christ”

εἰς τίνα ἢ ποῖον καιρόν *eis tina e poion kairon* — translation possibilities:
“person or time” (RSV, NASB, ESV), “time or circumstance” (KJV, NIV); see
Grudem, pp. 74-75

Predicted the sufferings of the Messiah

And the following glory of the Messiah

v. 12, These predictions for our benefit

NT preachers preach by same Holy Spirit

Interest of angels

3. The life of holiness and love, 1:13 - 2:3

1:13-16, The Christian life of holiness

v. 13, Self-control based on the Christian hope

v. 14, Not to be conformed the non-Christian desires

vv. 15-16, Follow God’s holiness

Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7

1:17-21, Basis of life of holiness

v. 17, Coming judgment of God

Note “pilgrim” theme

“Time of pilgrimage” (Χρόνον παροικίας); cf. 1:1, “strangers”
(παρεπιδήμους)

vv. 18-19, Sacrifice of Christ

Redemption from “empty way of life”

Not by anything in world, but by blood of Christ

Great value of price means greater responsibility for us

vv. 20-21, Career of Christ

Chosen (Greek “foreknown,” as in 1:1), revealed, raised from dead, glorified

1:22 - 2:3, Love of the brethren

1:22, Love springs from holiness and purity

1:23-25, New nature from regeneration produces this love

Word of God brings life, vv. 23, 25

Isaiah 40:6-8, permanence of word

2:1-3, Method to gain Christian love

v. 1, Put off the sins forbidden (NIV: malice, deceit/hypocrisy, envy, slander)

vv. 2-3, Absorb Christian teaching

Milk used in good sense (*contra* 1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:13)

4. Chosen by God, strangers in the world, 2:4-12

vv. 4-8, Living stones on the cornerstone

Jesus was rejected by man, yet chosen by God; in the same way, Christians have God’s approval, even though the world rejects and persecutes them (vv. 4-5).

Jesus the true cornerstone

(For discussion favoring Peter's so-called *peshet* exegesis of the OT "stone" passages, see Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, pp. 202-04; these notes are opposed to Longenecker's view.)

OT passages quoted, linked by "stone" figure:

Isa 28:16,

So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a tested stone,

A precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;
the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

This passage shows that in the time when God will be judging Jerusalem for its sin, there will be a remnant whom God will protect, even as his justice sweeps away the wicked (cf. vv. 5-6, 16-17). God himself is the valuable cornerstone that will keep the people secure.

Ps 118:22,

The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone;

The psalmist apparently is the king, who is surrounded by enemies, but who has been surprisingly delivered by God (v. 10). Loyalty to God is more important than friendship with men, even princes (vv. 8-9). He gives thanks for his deliverance (vv. 19-21), and recognizes that God has placed him over his enemies: "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." The author of this psalm seems to be a type of the coming Messiah (note also v. 26, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," speaking of his procession, v. 27).

Isa 8:14,

And he will be a sanctuary;
but for both houses of Israel he will be

A stone that causes men to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.

And for the people of Jerusalem he will be
a trap and a snare.

Here Isaiah speaks of the coming Assyrian judgment on Jerusalem, and warns the people not to trust in anything to save them except God himself.

Loyalty to Jehovah is the only protection; he is a sanctuary to those who trust in him, and a rock that will cause the others to fall.

**Note that all these quotations are speaking of the same situation that Peter faced. The true believers were confronted with a hostile world threatening death. In each case God promises to bless and protect them, and encourages them to faithfulness.

Jesus used at least two of these references as describing the final judgment of the wicked, of those who denied him:

Ps 118:22-23 in Mark 12:10-11

Ps 118:22 in Luke 20:17

Isa 8:14 alluded to in Luke 20:18

Perhaps Dan 2:34 alluded to in Luke 20:18

Likewise Paul uses the figure (Rom 9:33; 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20)

Christians as living stones, v. 5

Spiritual house

Holy priesthood

Spiritual sacrifices

v. 7a, For translation “To you who believe is the honor” see Grudem, p. 104

vv. 7-8, Unbelievers stumble

Destined for this fate

vv. 9-12, Believers chosen by God

v. 9, Figures of God’s people (similar to Exod 19:5-6)

Chosen people

Royal priesthood

Holy nation

A people belonging to God

v. 10, Former state

Not a people (cf. Hos 1:9)

No mercy (cf. Hos 1:6)

—Cf. Hos 1:10; 2:23

vv. 11-12, Resulting relations with the world

v. 11, Keep away from sinful desires

Theme: aliens (πάροιχος) and strangers (παρεπίδημος)

v. 12, Testimony to the unbelievers

NIV “pagans” = Gentiles

They accuse you of wrong

You desire they would be saved

“Day God visits us” — ties in with OT quotes (in vv. 6-8)

5. *The Christian in a hostile world, 2:13 - ch. 3*

a. *Subjects and Civil rulers, 2:13-17*

v. 14b, Duties of civil rulers

vv. 13-15, Proper submission to authorities

Because of God’s command

Because of public testimony

Note Peter’s exception in Acts 4:19

vv. 16-17, Freedom and submission

Christian liberty applies to all areas of life

Christian liberty not an excuse for evil actions

Christian liberty is under rule of God

Proper respect for everyone:

Church

God

Civil ruler – βασιλεύς *basileus* (“emperor” in ESV; most translations have “king”)

b. Slaves and masters, 2:18-25

(No word here for masters, only for slaves)

v. 18, The command

Submit with all respect

Even to harsh masters

vv. 19-20, Commendable actions in God’s sight

Not for enduring punishment for doing evil

But patiently enduring unjust punishment

Bear up because “he is conscious of God”

Suffer for “doing good,” Christian testimony

vv. 21-23, Christ’s example of patient suffering

Quote of Isa 53:9

Entrusted himself to God, who will judge justly

vv. 24-25, Christ’s accomplishments through his suffering

v. 24, Bore our sins on the cross

Healed us from our sins

Enabled us to die to sins, live to righteousness

Our sufferings “fill up” the sufferings of Christ (cf. Col 1:24)

v. 25, Became our Shepherd and Overseer

ἐπίσκοπος *episcopos*, “bishop,” overseer

c. Wives and husbands, 3:1-7

vv. 1-6, Duties of Christian wives

vv. 1, 5-6, Submission

Even to unbelieving husbands

May lead to their salvation

Example of Sarah

“Lord,” Gen 18:12; plus examples of her obeying Abraham

Not to fear bad consequences

vv. 2-5a, Internal character

Purity

Gentleness

Quietness

Dignity in strength, cf. Prov 31:25

v. 7, Duties of Christian husbands

Live with wife

Consideration, respect, thoughtfulness

Results in harmony and prayers heard (your—plural: husbands, or husband and wife);
contra 3:12

d. With other Christians and with Unbelievers, 3:8-22

vv. 8-12, Harmony in the church

vv. 8-9, Positive and negative commandments

Suffering possible in church? “To this you were called” – same as suffering with
evil masters (2:21)

vv. 10-12, Quotation from Ps 34:12-16

Importance of control of tongue, seeking peace

vv. 13-17, Christian’s response to unbelieving attacks

vv. 13-14, 17, Be doing what is right

Quotes Isa 8:12

vv. 15-16, Be prepared to give an answer

To answer slander

ἀπολογία *apologia*, answer, defense

Manner: with gentleness and respect

vv. 18-22, Reason why it is good to suffer for righteousness

ὅτι *hoti*, because

v. 18a, Because we were unrighteous

Because Christ, who did not deserve to suffer, suffered to make us righteous

vv. 18b-20, Events of Christ’s death and resurrection

v. 18, Put to death in the body

Made alive by the Spirit (resurrection)

v. 19, Through whom (= Holy Spirit)

Jesus preached to spirits [now] in prison

Or . . . to spirits in prison

When did he preach? In Noah's time? or during the time of his death?

And where did he preach? On earth through Noah, or in the prison (hades)?

v. 20, The spirits in prison

These are the souls of those who lived on the earth in the time of Noah, who rejected his warnings

Jesus was present through the Holy Spirit when Noah was preaching; cf. Noah as a preacher in 2 Pet 2:5. [Similar to the "Spirit of Christ" being in the OT prophets (1 Pet 1:11)]

Note on preaching to spirits in prison

For full discussion of related passages and theological issues involved, see John Pearson, *An Exposition of the Creed*, pp. 340-80; "descended into hell" being a later addition to the Apostles' Creed, see P. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* 2:54; note A. T. Robertson's translation of these verses, given orally, recorded by J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, 2:319:

" . . . Christ once for all died for sins, the Just One for the unjust ones, in order that He might bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but was made alive by the Spirit; in which [Spirit] He went and preached, in the days of Noah, while the longsuffering of God was waiting, while the ark was being built, to [the persons who are now] spirits in prison, to those who at [that] time were disobedient."

Related passage, 1 Pet 4:6, "the gospel was preached to those who are now dead" ("now" not in Greek, but understood)

vv. 20b-21a, Noah's deliverance symbolic of baptism

eight people saved through water (Grudem: "into which [ark] a few escaped through water," as Gen 7:11, 13)

water of baptism saves, if accompanied by faith

Note. Grudem states that 1 Pet 3:21 supports immersion and adult baptism. The translation of ἐπερώτημα *eperotema* as “pledge” (NIV) or as “answer” (KJV, NKJV) is agreeable to Reformed theology; his translation of “appeal” (RSV, NASB, NLT, ESV) is not required.

vv. 21b-22, Power of baptism stems from resurrection of Jesus

Now over all spiritual beings

Note relevance of Jesus’ experience for suffering Christians. Jesus underwent great suffering and humiliation in order to save the Christians. He was not appreciated by the people of the world—neither in Noah’s time nor in his own time. Yet the sufferings of Jesus are what bring salvation. And the sufferings of the saints are what bring them holiness and salvation.

6. Encouragements in suffering, ch. 4

There follow additional encouragements for the suffering Christians.

a. Our break with sin, 4:1-6

Since the Christian has already died to sin, which had appealed to his bodily desires, now he does not need to please his fleshly nature. He can suffer in the body, as Christ has done, and still live fully, finding his life in God.

v. 1, Adopt Christ’s attitude toward sin and the body

vv. 2-4, Change from the past life

Resulting misunderstanding from former companions in sin

vv. 5-6, Resulting judgment for those who remain in sin

v. 6, Gospel was preached to “the dead”; probably should be understood as NIV, “those who are [now] dead,” and be understood as people who in the past have been converted to Christ, and (perhaps) have given their lives for the gospel

The gospel was preached, so that men might be able to break the tie with sin, and escape God’s judgment of eternal death.

b. Our coming judgment, 4:7-11

Not only will the unsaved be judged by God, as in the previous section (v. 5), but so will the saved. In light of that coming judgment, we have more motivation to be faithful to Christ, even in persecution.

v. 7, “The end is near”

This life not long; judgment will follow

vv. 7b-11, Consequent Christian attitudes and actions

Clear mind

Self control

Brotherly love (covers sins)

Hospitality (no grumbling)

Use of gifts and graces

Speaking

Serving

Both bring glory to God

c. Our association with Christ, 4:12-19

In suffering the Christian learns of the sufferings of Christ, and has the privilege of sharing in them. If we are associated with Christ in his suffering, we will also share in his glory (cf. Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:11-13).

Type of suffering:

“Suffer” (πάσχω *pascho*), twelve times in 1 Peter—2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17, 18; 4:1 (twice), 15, 19; 5:10

v. 12, Painful (Greek “fiery”)

v. 14, Insulted

v. 16, As a Christian (not as evildoer, v. 15)

v. 18, “It is hard”

v. 19, According to God’s will

[Note that Christ’s sufferings had all these characteristics also.]

v. 13, Share in Christ’s sufferings

—Cf. John 18, Gal 6:17; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24

Share in Christ’s glory:

In the future, v. 13

Even now, v. 14

The Christian’s attitude in suffering:

v. 12, Not surprised

v. 13, Rejoice (cf. Peter himself in Acts 5:40-41)

v. 14, Understand you are being blessed (cf. oxymoron in Acts 5:41, they realized they were “counted worthy to suffer disgrace”)

v. 16, Do not be ashamed

v. 16, Praise God (cf. Paul and Silas in Acts 16:25)

vv. 17-18, Remember the fate of the persecutors (quoting Prov 11:31)

v. 19, Commit yourself to God in confidence (cf. Jesus on the cross)

7. Special messages, ch. 5

a. To the elders, 5:1-4

v. 1, οὖν *oun*, “therefore,” is in the Greek; not in KJV or NIV

Peter’s office as an elder, as well as an apostle (cf. Acts 15:2, etc.)

Keeping same theme: witness to Christ's sufferings, one who will share in his glory

vv. 2-3, Duties of elders

Be shepherds, overseers

Willing, not mere duty

Motivated by love, not greed

Serving, not lording

Examples

v. 4, Reward from the Chief Shepherd for the elders

b. To the young men, 5:5-11

Needs

vv. 5-6, Need for humility

Submission to the elders

Humility to each other

Prov 3:34, He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

Humility before God

Await his exalting you

v. 7, Need for confidence

Casting anxiety on the Lord (Ps 55:22)

vv. 8-9, Need for watchfulness

The devil as a roaring lion (cf. 1 Tim 3:6, devil's trap for novice elders—pride)

Devil behind persecutions

Knowledge of sufferings of fellow Christians “throughout the world”

Promise

vv. 10-11, Same promise as the others have

After sufferings, experience strength from God, then share Christ’s glory

c. Final greetings, 5:12-14

v. 12, Silas

Companion of both Paul and Peter

More than a mere stenographer (Grudem: letter carrier)

v. 13, “She who is in Babylon,” probably the church there (Rome)

Mark, my son (strong tradition linking John Mark to Peter)

v. 14, “Kiss of love”

Not necessarily normative; friendly, warm greeting